

Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of
Proposal for Creation of the Low Power FM
(LPFM) Broadcast Service
Docket No. MM 99-25

To: Federal Communications Commission

Comments of Scott Drew

I am wholeheartedly in favor of the creation of Low Power FM Radio Service. Access to broadcasting on the FM radio spectrum has been denied to ordinary citizens for too long. Existing ownership has a virtual stranglehold on the airwaves, leaving few options for the general public to express themselves on the radio dial. I feel that the following 10 points address specific topics within this issue that should be taken into account when the FCC establishes LPFM service:

1. LPFM must allow for "commercial" (commercially supported) as well as "non-commercial" stations.

2. Both the 2nd and 3rd adjacent channel restrictions must be dropped for LPFM stations. Improvements in receiver design since the rules were written decades ago will allow these restrictions to be dropped without causing interference to existing stations or planned digital I.B.O.C. signals. FACT: Hundreds of full-power (grandfathered short-spaced) FM stations have been operating on 2nd and 3rd adjacent channels for several years with no interference complaints. If these stations do not cause interference neither will lower power LPFM stations.

3. Preferably the FCC will use a "prohibited contour overlap" method of predicting interference, as is now easily done in the Low Power television service with the appropriate computer program. The LPTV service uses a computer program "LP-ONE" to show if a proposed station would cause interference. It would be a one time cost to have a similar program written for LPFM processing. This would allow for many more LPFM stations to be created nationwide and would make the use of standard "directional patterns" feasible. Allowing directional antennas, as is done in the LPTV service, again allows many more stations to be created by putting the signal where needed while limiting the signal in the direction of stations that need to be protected. The directional antenna patterns would be included in the FCC "directional antenna database" and thus using their patterns would be a simple matter.

4. The 60 meter (197 feet) limitation on Class LP-1000 stations in the FCC NPRM should be increased to 100 meters (328 feet), which is the same as for Class-A full-power FM stations. This would provide for an additional 2-3/4 miles of coverage without requiring any additional power. Distance to 60 dBu contour would increase from 8.8 miles to 11.76 miles, which could help LPFM stations reach significantly more people and thus enhance their ability to survive. While I can understand keeping LP-100 antenna heights under 200 feet so as to not require FAA clearance, there is no reason to limit "primary status" LP-1000 stations to such an arbitrary height, since they will have to abide by the majority of FCC rules that apply to full-

power stations. LP-1000 stations must have a 100 meter limit, not 60 meters as proposed. This is very important!

5. LPFM must not be subjected to a narrower bandwidth than full-power FM stations since audio quality could suffer. We do support dropping sub-carriers other than stereo however to prevent interference.

6. Some form of ownership restrictions must be in place to keep this service for "local owners" so as to not be snapped up by the large corporate broadcasters. The "50-mile rule", proposed in RM-9242, that requires an owner to live within 50-miles of his/her proposed antenna site would work nicely and would be easy to enforce by requiring applicants to list the coordinates (latitude & longitude) of their residence as well as their antenna site on the LPFM application along with a certification that they meet this requirement. If this rule cannot be established then some other method of assuring local ownership for LPFM must be worked out.

7. The FCC should try some form of "first-come first-served" application process with five-day filing windows. If this system proves unworkable, then and only then should the FCC consider using auctions to select between mutually exclusive (MX) applicants. If auctions are considered, there must be some form of substantial "bidding credits" available to small business applicants that would allow them to compete with applicants with large financial resources at their disposal. This is imperative since we are trying to lower the barrier to entry for new applicants of lesser financial status. The present scheme of bidding credits of 35% or 25% would not provide sufficient leverage for financially challenged individuals. I would suggest something more in the range of 50% to 75% for a more even playing field, if auctions are mandated.

8. AM station owners with night-time power of less than 250 watts should be allowed to apply for LPFM but should certify that they will divest of the AM station within 180 days if awarded the LPFM license. I understand the plight of some AM station owners who have struggled with insufficient nighttime power on a AM daytimer. They must agree to divest of the AM if awarded a LPFM, which will also help clean up the AM band of interference. Otherwise, those who own any part of a full-power (full-service) radio station, full-power TV station or newspaper should be barred from applying for a LPFM license or buying such a station once constructed by another party.

9. Class LP-1000 stations should include stations from 1,000 watts down to 200 watts, as long as an engineering showing proves no interference using the "prohibited contour overlap" method as mentioned above. These stations should be "primary status" and protected to their 1 mV/m (60 dBu) contour.

10. Class LP-100 stations should be designed to fit in where LP-1000 stations will not fit, even using directional antenna patterns kept in the FCC database. These stations should be "secondary status" with a minimum of FCC rules to adhere to, mainly technical rules to prevent interference.